Signet

Queens College
Charlotte, N.C.

Characteristically barefooted,
We went for a walk in the woods.
The wind blew our hair.
The sounds of civilization escaped us
As we walked to the heart of the wood.
We found a clearing there,
Sheltered,
Yet free,
Where a daisy grew.
It welcomed us,
And warmed our hearts
With its desire
Simply to be a daisy -
To feel the sun on its face.
And we took it for that,
And reveled in it,
Staying there to share
Its simple beauty.

Then-
We turned our backs for the
Briefest moment.
Man came crashing through
With boots that marred the soil,
Bulldozer, brick.
He built a wall,
And arranged the clearing
According to his blueprint,
Then went crashing on.

We returned,
Saddened.
Our garden was no longer free.
And the daisy
No longer joyed in being
A daisy.
But wondered
And worried
If it was what a daisy should be,
And if the sun
Struck it
From the proper angle.

Diane Hood

Midnight

you sleep
and your breathing
regularly
rises and falls
with the wind

your smoky lids
veil your eyes
like blue satin
sealing them off from me
for yet another night's respite

escape from the cold
my friend
into the warmth of your dreams
wrapped in a sleep
so deep

the sun sets in your hair
even at midnight
and the moon dances in your smile
until dawn.

Kathy Fesperman

Your image is
soft and clear -

Reminding me
of a
rainbow
that poured
forth a
reddish-brown aura
over the city -

You are a
sepia-toned memory -

and
I will always
give you
poetry,
minuets,
and
flowers.

Linda Jennings

meditations on an upbeat love

filtered sounds
rebound off vacant courtyards
two sets
of steps
waltzing
down
the
lane
singing and laughing
a gentle touch
then twirling whirling
madly dashing
around and
around
faster
faster
don't stop please
enough
a random walk
a talk
christ which may to turn too quickly
much too quickly
must slow down the pace
don't want to hurt her
in my
haste

Brian Morrisey

yes
the paper's still warm
i have written in blood
all my life
and when i die
they will say

her heart bled here
right at this desk
$1.50 ---thank you

they may publish my letters
and punish my children
for what their mother
did
but
they can never erase
my words
printed indelibly
on the brow of the world.

Kathy Fesperman

No more will you wake up to hating life
God viewed your life of undesirable event.
He took you away today, and you took many with you.
Those people, what had they done to you?
Why did that trigger feel compelled to cut down
these meaningful lives?
We will know never what the root of your ageless
hate for life is,
I watch your coffin and feel no sorrow.
Your face has a strange revealment of a lonely
past.
The pain of death tugs me not;
It is something I believe you wanted all along.

Susan Vance

Constant dialogue -
  confused with
  concern and salty tears
    in a sorted crowd -
Forced into
  a prenatal cave
and an
  almost fetal position
    to survive -
Fighting -
  a hero always
  fights something -
Isolated -
  the hermit always
  builds a shell
    and
  whispers a prayer
    for
  an incarnate rebirth.

Linda Jennings

Time

Free flowing
  sands of time
caught,
  set firmly
in concrete blocks
  of seconds, minutes.
Time-locked tombs
  built by man
hour by hour,
  minute by minute,
until at last
  he can't see over
and he can't run away.
Concrete cells
  held in place
by the mortar
  of so many lives.
Imprisoning
  until the return to the sands
with the passage
  of time.

Anne Newsome

A CHRISTMAS WALK

The great bay window is lit brilliantly
From within
As I stand and watch
Through snow-trimmed panes of glass.
Inside they laugh and sing
As they hang the decorations;
The tree lights shine;
Concentrated points of light
In a universe of light.
I watch, And I wish,
Standing in the snow, my breath
Forming great clouds of fog.
Shall I enter?
Shall I step through the door?
Shall I sit in the light of their fire?
Hang my ornament on the shining tree?
Ah - sweet dream.
My boots scratch the pavement
As I turn toward the door.
It is solid, brown, motionless
Above the stone steps that lead to it.
Diamonds of light
Shine through the latticed window
To lie resplendent in the street.
"A short walk, up the steps, and in,"
I think.
But no.
That door is locked to me
Because I myself threw away the key.
I turn and walk to the diamonds in the street.
I step into the light:
The diamonds dance
On my face, my hands,
What joy!
I turn to leave. They remain.
The singers inside are warm,
I, numb with fiercest cold.
But God, I love the snow,
The stars above my head
That shine like the lights
From the recesses of the tree.
The voices fade behind me
As I walk alone
Down an empty street.
But it's my street.

Diane Hood

When I look to the sky
and see your eyes;
Pools of laughter swirling
and dancing about.
I find myself wondering
about times to come.
Whether our love will
grow, or be ripped apart
by some unknown evil.
Then I remember you're
already gone . . .

Susan Westphal

TO AN UN-MET LOVE

And the greatest mystery of all time

Is this;

How can it be that my heart
Is locked with yours?
How can it be that I
Can yearn -
So desperately -
For your existence?
How can it be that
I am so alone,
Yet,
You are here as well -
in every breath I take,
in every song
I hold in my heart
Because you are not here.
In every movement
That lies hidden in
Seeming stillness,
In the hour of preparation.

And the greatest question of all time

Is this:

Does your soul hear when
My soul
Cries out for you
In the stillness if
Our Mother,
Night?

Diane Hood

after the accident

Pieces of a nightmare,
sprinkled like glass upon the brain,
dig maggot-like
beneath
the
rotting surface
to find some
untouched bit of
meat--I wonder--
how can I
ever sleep again?

Patricia C. Marks

I've wasted no time,
For I've seen that even anger
Convoluted, contains a lesson.

And I've known the subtle
difference
Between sound advice
and preaching,

But then again
You never saw that
childish and childlike
Have different connotations -

And so
Sought to be a woman,
But in body only, little one -
For the mystery
You're still chasing . . .

Denise Boerckel

Trilogy and Song: prologue

you bright and morning star
who once out shone even Gabriel
    you who anarrayed
    made peacocks pale to insignificance
you who once sat by my father
who wore his ring
to whom he would give his kingdom
    you who plotted and schemed
    for revolt
and with your kind -
one third of all there -
you marched on my father
you demanded surrender
    foolish weakling
    though stronger than i
    you are infinitely smaller than he
he hurled you from his side -
you who had torn his heart in two -
down into the depths
he hurled you - alive -
    you earned not even the dignity
    of death in battle
alive and disgraced
you rule your dark kingdom
of a third of the stars that fell from heaven
    and you make your own light
by unnatural means.

Kathy Fesperman

Trilogy and Song: introit

You cry
and strike out
but your icy tears turn to stone
for he hears you not

you can no longer fly
you are thrice caged
for he has ripped you wings from your back
swathed your manacled body in chains
and shut you in a tomb
where the living never go
and here you remain
your attempts at flight
are a grotesque dance
at which your subjects jeer
though they move less than you
and shudder in the piercing stare
of one who tried
and failed

grim cold dancer
most abhorred prima donna
now beneath the stage
where your eerie cries
congeal the blood of saints
unprepared

chilling their hearts unto death.

Kathy Fesperman

When lies are lost
it's like the sound of the soul's mirror
shattering, with prisms of lost images being
thrown into nothingness,
or the empty space between the head and the wall,
as they collide, the head continuing to move as
the skull and the brain vanish,
and the pure white light of truth, sharp and
jagged, no moon, no stars, no romance, just
cutting, sawing, killing,
and then the darkness.

When the truth is found,
clutch it, even as you realize that you will,
like the tides from the sea, sink into the sand
and disappear into the spheres of the earth's
hot, molting care, and burn.
Scream it
from the mountain top.
although you know you will fall,
fall,
fall,
into the burning lake at the bottom, and sink,
drown, never more to become, to realize.

Be it,
even with the stones of hatred and jealousy
being hurled like planets to crush your being.

Bill Gouge

To Denise

i know your heart
if not your mind

we totter on the edge
of an unknown beam
knowing nothing
but that on which we stand
even
as it
creaks

we lovers of beauty
are
endlessly tortured

we stand
with bits of our souls
in our hands.

Kathy Fesperman

A cup of coffee -
A transition -
A secret between friends -
The laugh's on you -

I'll not tell anyone
until late in the
stage of the game
that the
light in your crystal ball
went out
years ago.

Linda Jennings

The fruit of our being must fall free
from the tree of a faceless humanity; and rotting,
withering, it must die
and shed the false protectivity
of its mushy flesh and leave
the pit of life; the essence of existence,
the bare life-breeding force of Being
to implant itself deep
within the cold, damp soil of sub-terrestrial
darkness, losing itself in death
for a moment of mystery
waiting to bear forth the authentic life-branches
of its dormant potentialities.

Lee Patrick O'Hare

When I was sixteen, nubile and naive,
I met you.
We talked for four straight and intense hours
about god and our parents.
We climbed a mountain together and at the top
you kissed me long and well.
I knew then that I could fly.

When I was eighteen you came home from
Korea and the Army.
We talked for four straight days about you
and me and the Army "crock"
We sat by a duck-filled lake together with
our feet dangling in the water
Then you kissed me long and well.
I knew then that I wanted us to fly.

Now I'm twenty-one, cynical and careful, and
I visit you on the weekend
We sit and I watch your blue haze rise as you
talk of the quality of Jamaican grass
I watch T.V. as you talk, and then you pull me
to you and kiss me long and well.
I know now that your kisses are like orange juice -
mixed with cigarette smoke.
And I've forgotten how to fly.

Suzanne Brice

The breaking point . . .
  Always in pastels,
  Like a sun hovered
    Round and raging,
Behind its blanket-grey farewell,
  It streams throught to
Spread the darkness -
  But in touching, turns pastel.

And for you, my friend,
  An easel -
  Must shape your anger well.
  Know there is no true catharsis,
    All our outlets
      Just blend
        Pastels.

Denise Boerckel

CONVERSATION

We are like a weird play,
You and I,
We sit here
And go through
Our pretensions
Of loving,
Of understanding,
Of wanting to understand,
And we don't.
We are hypocrites
Nonpareil,
You and I.
But still,
I wonder,
Which of us
Is the liar?

Diane Hood

Dolphins

The dolphins come from nowhere.

  Creamy white foam
    splashes your face
  and you close your eyes
    to the burning salt
  opening them to find

Grey dancers under the bow

  backs gleaming gold
    in the setting sun,
  Keeping pace with the ship
    in their spontaneous ballet.

Four, five, six,

  spiralling down
    cutting back to the surface
  rhythmic, rolling.

Lidless eyes, sly shy smiles,

  they tease and play
    leaping from fiery red water.

Anne Newsome

Time -
  savagely molests the
  innocence of children
  just as it
  kills the
  magic of love -
With time
  as your weapon
    you twisted
      my emotions
  like a Speidel watchband
    to test how
    far it would go
      before tension peaked
        to breaking -

My dear -
  My love is not Twistoflex.

Linda Jennings

CHRISTINE

And you, too,
Are a rock.
But not an ordinary rock,
For you must be
The royalty of rocks -
For you must be
The royalty of rocks -
A Silk Rock.
Only a Silk Rock could be
As firm,
Yet sensitive, as gentle,
Yet durable and lovely as you are,
Giving off subtle shades
Of colors.
Elegant,
With just a touch of gold
That shimmers
As the light strikes it:
Appearing deceptively soft,
Producing endless tones of beauty,
And concealing
Sudden, surprising strength.

Diane Hood

Winds and moods and seasons and love
All change -
  Similar to shadows
  They each have their shades of
    intensity

But I gave you a kaleidescope
  And asked you to blend them . . .
    A long time ago,
    The child within you could.

But -
Like the winds and moods
And seasons of love,

It all changed.

Denise Boerckel

WRITER'S MANIFESTO

Like a dry sponge,
I squeeze my brain
for dreams, to water
this parched reality.

Lee Patrick O'Hare

In this last of meeting places
  We grope together
  and avoid speech.
The old sorrows brought there,
  Now dried, flattened out, breaking
  into interesting dust at
    the merest look . . .
  Just the little hurts,
Oh, I could get very sad
  to try to tell of a dozen or so . . .

Susan Westphal

BAIL

HOUSE OF THE MOIRAI

There was no moon that night. Only rain that prattled against the windowpane in ceaseless conversation. Trees bowed across the meadow to the storm's strong will and consuming passion.

Catherine's fingers reached out to meet the rain's persistent assault. Her slate-grey eyes burned with anticipation at images floating beyond her grasp. Tapered fingers wove patterns across the misted glass. As always, dreams were denied the pleasure of reality. Catherine frowned.

"What are you thinking, Catherine?" Catherine's scowl slipped away as she turned to face the girl standing by her side.

"I was thinking of the rain and the laze freedom it enjoys as it falls to earth," she said, staring once more at the hazy meadow and black wood beyond.

"There is no freedom in a sure end, Catherine," the girl replied. She had the appearance of a china doll creature of frail beauty that would easily break with age.

"I see," Catherine sighed, her fingers giving one last caress to the pane. "You ever turn the conversation, Megan."

"Whatever do you mean, Catherine?" her blue eyes wide with innocence.

"I mean the prophecy, Megan." The small crease between Catherine's brows betrayed her irritation.

"Do not doubt their power, Catherine. The Moirai have been with man since time's beginning. We cannot prevent what must surely be."

Megan's calm acceptance angered Catherine.

"We are different, you and I. I will not sit here and let some old crone read my life to me . . . I'm sorry, Megan," Catherine finished with a gush. Megan's fragil calm had shaken briefly with Catherine's words.

"It is not wise to speak of such things, Catherine," Megan whispered. Then, a smile trembled across her transluscent features.

"Come, let us join the Moirai," she said. Catherine returned the smile and followed Megan to the main room where the Morrai chanted and wove delicate tapestries far into the night.

Megan knelt by the comforting hearth, her eyes lingering over the marvelous tapestry the women were presently working on. Catherine sighed. She ached to be out in the rain and tell it of her dreams.

"What troubles your mind, girl," crackled the oldest crone, pointing her spindle toward Catherine. Catherine stared into the woman's socketless eyes.

"The prophecy," Catherine replied.

"Do you doubt it?"

Catherine's face was a prism of conflicting emotions. Her eyes wandered restlessly around the room and finally came to rest on the tapestry. The words spilled from her dry throat.

"I wish to choose my own path in life. . . " she paused, eyes still on the tapestry. Lowering her head, she came to a decision, "Yes, I doubt it."

The old woman nodded, as if understanding some of the turmoil Catherine went through to answer the question put to her.

"Lachesis," was all the old woman finally said.

Catherine kept her head bowed, not caring to linger over the punishment she would surely receive from Lachesis, the middle sister. Megan wanted desparately to comfort her friend but the Moirai's unblinking stare held her back.

Lachesis withdrew a long black box from the many folds of her robe. He features held no emotion as she tilted the box and a rain of wooden rods poured onto the floor. Lachesis studied the rods. All was silent.

"It is good," Lachesis muttered at last. "The time has come, sisters."

"Then let it be done," whispered Atropos, the third sister.

Catherine raised her head at last, shivering from the ominous chill of Atropos's words. Megan locked her fingers tightley, praying Lachesis's rods would not bode ill for Catherine.

"It begins . . even now," Lachesis closed her eyes as she spoke. When she raised her heavy lids, only the whites were visible.

The oldest sister mumbled some words beneath her breath, then said, "Leave us." The girls left as quickly as dignity would allow.

Megan glanced over her shoulder before following Catherine up the stairs. Astonishment mixed with dismay flashed over her face. The Moirai were ripping the tapestry and throwing it onto the grasping flames.

Catherine could not sleep. The rain's incessant babbling had long since lulled Megan to the netherworld's portals. Catherine wished she had such a clear conscience.The Moirai's words disturbed her. She could not believe Lechesis's rods would let her escape the Moirai's wrath so easily. Catherine sighed. Her life would have fallen so easily into place, if only she had possessed Megan's blind faith of the prophecy. Fall so easily to a sure end, like the rain.

A slapping sound brought Catherine back from beneath the dull waves of sleep. Would this be her punishment, then? To never sleep? She pulled back the bed covers and slipped on her robe. The shutter had come loose.

Catherine eased the window up, hoping the noise had not disturbed Megan's peaceful slumber in the next room. She caught the mischieveous shutter and hooked it to the latch at the side of the house. Catherine closed the window and stood listening to the rain hit against the panes. She found comfort in its words.

A noise below drowned out the rain's chatter. Catherine narrowed her eyes' that she might discern its source. Nothing. She turned away from the window.

"Come to me, Catherine," a voice whispered in her ear. Catherine spun, looking for the source. Nothing. And still the haunting voice beckoned her.

"Come to me, Catherine."

It came from beyond the window. Catherine parted the misty curtain and beheld a devil on horseback. The black hollows of his eyes called to her.

"Come, Catherine."

And Catherine went.

"It begins . . . even now," the front door clipped and Megan woke at its sharp words. At the sight of Catherine's empty bed, Megan galloped down the stairs. An awesome fear had begun to nibble away at a corner of her brain.

Trilogy and Song: fini

chained
you await the dawn
    you who rebelled
    who forfeited you birthright
    who await the dawn in darkness
    now alien to the day
you see barely through cracks
time has worn in your cell's wall
but still
none of the forbidden daylight
streams through
    and you wait . . .
    wait for the final battle
    at dawn
    knowing the outcome -
    inevitable truth:
    you cannot win
you must play the final game
for which you have been preserved
then
beaten, broken
grovel at the younger one's feet
while he is crowned
    your once mighty body
    now shattered and bleeding
    your once proud and beautiful head
    once held so high -
    now, gory, bowed down
    as the last lights fade from your eyes
    for eternity
    he will let you die in peace.

Kathy Fesperman

Trilogy and Song: lament

O bright and morning star
who once shone so brightly
your candle has flickered
and gone out
the wax of which you were made
has swallowed the flame

O bright and morning star
you were beautiful
before you fell.

Kathy Fesperman

As a dream upon the wing
    you came,
Dancing to the blowing
    of the wind,
I pondered the mountain
    upon which your
    thoughts soared.
Confusion on my mind,
The eyes of countless
    tears glowed,
Your hand straying outward
I took steadfast hold,
as my journey through
  life,
Hesitates hoping to
    touch your mind.

Meg Masterman

("I know, I know, I know,
But you don't understand
How things have been lately . . . ")

Got to get out of this place,
Too many mornings with the
    hot rain outside,
  Another six-pack morning,
  Running in your eyes.

And a little child would
    lead us,
But he's ducked behind the
    screen,
  And I'd like to help you,
  But I'm tired of directing
  Scenes from a marriage.

And so, it's nine a.m.
And you're looking for
    something
To squeeze the morning lemon in -

It won't be my glass.

Denise Boerckel

I came with my sorrow, to a place I know
where water has been flowing for
many years
How swiftly flows the stream of life
compared to the trickle of my tears
The river of life sweeps us along
I, being swept along have known
those cool, clear mountain streams
I, being swept along have known
Those raging torrents and thunderous
cascades
Clinging to that elusive branch, love
until its breaking
Then I continue my journey
To the sea

Thomas Moore, Jr.

APPLE PICKING MEMORIES

Apple picking memories brush against my thoughts.
Frost-shelled apples shower like hailstones
as I kick the props loose from the ground.
That highest cluster sparkling red
in the morning sunlight
just out of my fingers' reach.
A gust of lemon-mint breathes up my tree
mixing its fragrance with the sweet apples
crawling with worms on the ground below.
Swarms of yellow jackets hover
over the rotting fruit. A bin of just-picked
winesaps being carried on the forks
of a rattling tractor. It grunts
towards the packing house leaving
a mist of blue exhaust behind.
Frozen fingers snap stems, twisting
apples free from the stubborn spurs.
I climb through the sun-gold leaves, branches
cat-clawing my face and back snapping
my eyes like icicles.
The foreman yells three rows away,
"Don't go bruisin' them damn apples"
I place them gently in my tin picking bucket,
two apples in each hand,
sometimes three when they're small enough.
Memories in Malott.
I take another bite out of North Carolina and think
maybe next year I'll make it back
for apple picking.

Lee Patrick O'Hare

Mind Divers

No crack
No warning
No sound
They swim the depths
forcing the walls of your mind
hands pressing
faces staring
eyes burning.

Sometimes dams break
Sometimes minds lose themselves
in the deep.

Cry,
remembering those
who gave
power
mindless
love
fleeting
friendship
bondless.

No sound
but
sometimes dams break.

Anne Newsome

The aftermath -

Like fitting a jigsaw
puzzle together
and finding
some pieces
were missing -

Linda Jennings

LIGHT

Before the birth of reason and emotion,
I existed,
Merely living for today . . . or yesterday.

Like vision through a fog,
The light grew dimmer
Time passed
Silence became more powerful.

As if in answer, new light burst forth.
New vision
light dispursed in colors across the spectrum.
Psalms, like precious gems
linger indefinitely.

Words fade into blurs of red and gold
Calm and sure, I hold
Light which cannot fade.

Susan Forester

Jacksonville, here she was again, only this time she wasn't just passing through. It was time, long past time, she went to that place where she grew up. Windy Hill Nursery, owned and operated by Jack L. Longmire, now deceased.

The white Benz glided along the bridge over the Little Pottsburg. It was six-lane now and it used to be only two, a long time ago.

"Things can't be all that bad," she thought to herself as she lowered the grey leather visor against the glare from the sluggish brown creek. Right hand turn on to Spring Forest avenue, past the now abandoned State Farm building. They'd moved the business out to Deerwood for lack of parking space.

"Used to go out to that parking lot after looking for gopher turtles or bike-riding wildly through the trails and fly kites or watch Dads and sons fly those gasoline planes. The buzz could be heard all over the neighborhood on weekends," memories buried for so long came back at amazing speed. Two years of college and three in the Caribbean hadn't erased any of it, just covered it over with more colorful ones.

She passed Mrs. Golden's property and came to the place her grandfather once owned. She saw the changes almost all at once. The squared white posts at the end of the drive weren't there, the sign wasn't there, the crepe myrtle wasn't there or the cedar bushes. The roses weren't there, those beautiful, wonderful, fragrant roses weren't there. Goddamnit! The pecan tree wasn't even there. Nothing was there.

She pulled the emergency brake, put the Benz in neutral and shut it off, but wasn't sure if she wanted to get out or not. It was about eighty degrees outside and in spite of the tinted windows the car began to get hot inside.

"Well, it's now or never. Wish to hell I could make it never, but I can't. I've been denying reality too long," she said to herself.

From across the street a person looked out from the cool shade of a house. He'd been watching the Benz since it had first pulled up, but couldn't make out who was inside. A pair of slim brown legs appeared under the open door and a smallish figure rose out of the car. Dark, shoulder length hair shone red-gold in the sun. The chick, whoever she was, was deeply tanned and dressed in a gauzy, off-white dress that caught every breath of wind and flowed with it. She closed the door and locked it, after throwing her purse back inside. Her footsteps raised shimmery clouds of dust in the sandy dirt. She turned to the house across the street and shaded her eyes to see better.

"Well," she said to herself, "not much has changed over there. I see Mrs. Robbins is still driving a school bus."

An old dog started across the street barking half-heartedly. He was a hairy black and tan and as he got closer she could see the grey frosting his snout and beginning around the old brown eyes.

"Mickey," she called. "Here Mickey, come on now, don't you be barking at me." She approached the dog, arm outstretched with palm turned down. The dog continued his barking, but crept closer all the same. She heard a shrill whistle and looked up.

"Mickey, here boy, leave the lady alone, boy. Come on, Mickey." The man whistled again and started across the yard.

"Look, I'm sorry about the dog. He barks when the house creaks anymore." He was dressed in tennis shoes, Levi's and a printed T-shirt. He had the same devilish green eyes and tousled brown hair, but he didn't walk with the same bouncing stride that he once had. His pace had slowed, as had everything else around there.

Megan stood in the open doorway, oblivious to the whipping sheets of rain, and screamed at Catherine. Catherine had crossed the meadow and was leaning against a crude stone wall, where trees of another time lay beyond.

"NO!" shrieked Megan, as Catherine determinedly pulled at an ivy-coated gate. Megan pushed against the wall of water. It would not give.

The gate shut. Catherine had gone. Megan sank to the pliable earth and wept.

Gray light poured through windowpanes like prongs of fire reaching for a wayward moth. Its slender fingers felt their way across the plank floor, shuddering, clouding over, yet continuing their assault.

Moans of despair racked Catherine's swollen body as she pressed her flesh deeper into the depths of the mattress. Her eyes never left the window.

"How long, Lachesis?" she cried.

"Any time, girl," Lachesis replied, low. She was setting the thread's length for a new tapestry.

Megan lowered her head, trying vainly to close out the pain of thought. Catherine had returned to the House of the House of the Moirai, her will shattered and her body distorted with pregnancy.

"Megan--" Catherine's voice was full of urgency.

"I'm here, Catherine," cooed Megan, struggling to quiet Catherine's ever increasing sobs until the pain had past.

"You were right, you know," she paused, catching her breath, "about the rain." Catherine gasped the words and twisted away from Megan's grasp. Megan paled.

"Atropos," Lachesis called for her younger sister, "you are needed."

Catherine died as Atropos cut the cord of life between mother and child. Megan slumped against the clear window, pounding the glass until it splintered in all directions. She did not care that her hands were slashed and weaving red patterns across her dress.

"It is done, Catherine," she said. "you are free."

The rainbow's not a rainbow anymore,
    There's no great Oz up there beyond it.
It's merely a spectrum of colors
    caused by white light
    shining through water deposits.

There's no man in that moon.
He moved out because the neighborhood got crowded
    by people with self-contained life support systems.

And sunsets are colorful because tons of
    man's waste is vomited into the atmosphere.
Were sunsets any more beautiful before man helped them out?

They've taken the rainbows
    and explained them away.
They've taken the moon
    and made it a rock.
They've taken the sunsets
    made them "new and improved."

Anne Newsome

We were in love last night -
Our bodies wrapped together
as tightly and simply
as a newspaper tossed
on the doorstep at sunrise -
Our energies entangled
in an aura of warmth
surrounding us
in a creative meld -

We were in love last night -
I wanted to be one with you
while I stroked your face
in a way familiar to cats -
and you were in and out
of a dream perhaps -
perhaps just restlessness -

We were in love last night -
Reality hit very close to home
and I was unable to
sleep or
express my love in a way
or a word that seemed adequate -
my thoughts were only of you -
and emotions rushed through me
that have never existed before
like the lifestream of a
raging river -

We were in lone last night -
The clouds dusted over the moon
and I wanted to give you
a red sun for morning -
another day -
another sun -
another moon -

Linda Jennings

IN THE PARK

sitting on a splintered green bench of love affairs
memorialized by pocket knives
tiny acorns half-embedded
in the dirt a few thin twigs
duck feathers a beer can ring
top a gliding swan followed by sixteen
black-capped ducks orange bills
shining in the lakelight one
goose lagging behind a crumpled-
up pack of Marlboros floating
between ducks black webs dripping
their toeprints acorns
picked out of the dirt
around my feet
I didn't know ducks liked acorns

Lee Patrick O'Hare

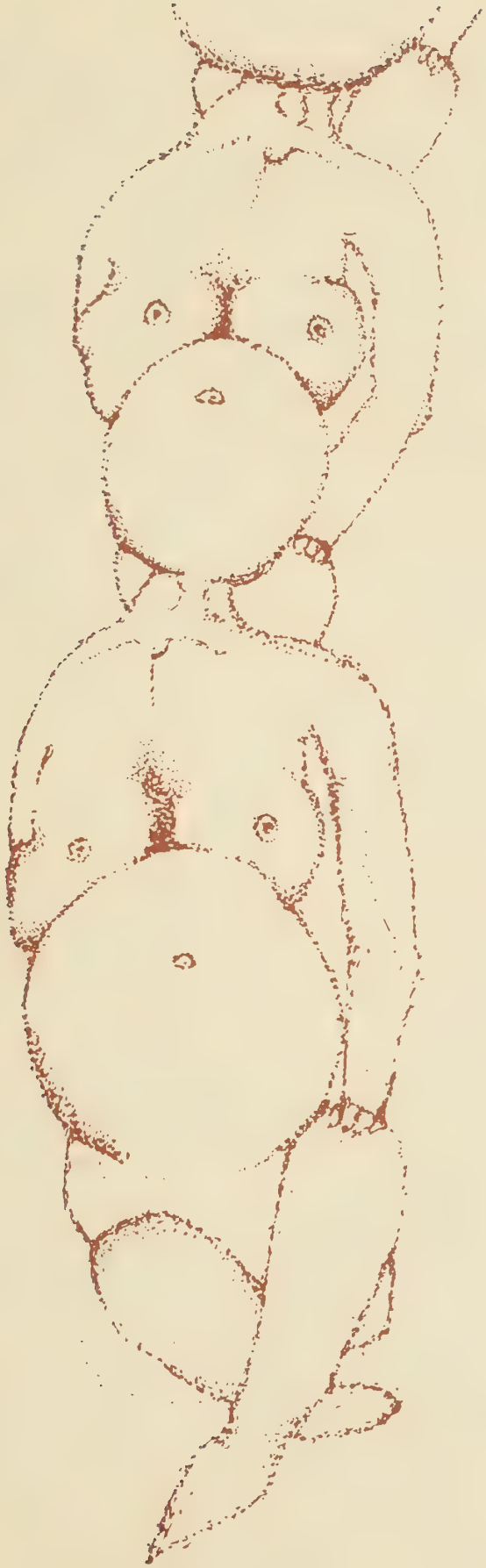
original sins

if it took a serpent and a winesap
to prod applesauce adam
into sin & out of eden
think what exiles
we might have known
with my cornucopia of original sins
and my snake bite kit

Jack Dillard

The nothingness of never haunts my soul,
Like screaming into space and hearing your echo,
I know nothing of life and never will . . .

Bill Gouge



Desire's
sweet sickness
has drawn
a coward me
to a callous you
once more.

Whether 'tis nobler
to protest
flanked by
morality's chaperone/teachings
that bind
my most willing limbs
or
to profess
in sadness and uncertainty
my now
stale
committment to
love you
in abstinance . . . in celebacy

Desire's sweet sickness
has
catapulted
a coward me to a callous you . . . once more.

Suzanne Brice

Abalone

Dull red spiralling
about a dimly shining
silver-green eye
Once clinging to surf-swept coasts
where no man saw
the violet turquoise secrets
you kept.

Now in reverse position
an incandescent bulb throws
cold light on your inner surface.
Spectrums of rainbow colors
play upon the eye and make one dream
of sandy shores and otters
dancing on the waves.

Once a house for a living being
now stained by the ashes
of a smoker's habit.

Anne Newsome

You ask something of me -
Everyone asks something
of someone
at sometime -
I gave everything to you -
And you and your institutionalized friends
sucked every bit of my soul
from me
before I had time
to turn the alarm clock off -
All that remains are
raw and bloody nerves
and glazed eyes
and what was once a mighty heart
is now held in choking slender chains -
I have come to find you want that too -
Neurotic women such as yourself
often have
fantasies -
Perepeteia is a tragedy
in life -
and in mine -

Linda Jennings

Tales of an autumn past -
Leaf-covered days with wonder,
To kill the chill.

At dusk -
I once touched your shadow,
Tangled under a tree,
And so tall,
I knew it went on forever.

But it's spring coming now -
And where we once blended,
Lengthening light yields two,
Separate - and mutually exclusive.

Denise Boerckel

You thought it was only a game
when we stood around you
leering and laughing
and so you tried
to play along and I think
I heard you giggle
once or twice
when we told you that
everything was fine
and then we started throwing
bricks on top of each other
smearing mortar all over the place
and you being on the other side
wondered why we wouldn't
let you step over.
If I remember
correctly you asked a few
too many questions
and someone said they feared
that you knew what was going on
and would put up a fight. But that
doesn't really matter now
since it's been so long
and nobody's heard anything
from you in quite a while although
sometimes I think I hear your voice
muffled somewhere from far away
but those kind of things are soon explained
away and forgotten
and so we go along and try
to convince ourselves that nothing
ever really happened at all.

Lee Patrick O'Hare

KATHY

Yes, the waves have crashed over you
As you sat, immovable, on the beach you loved;
But did not grind you down, Only
Added some sand to your beloved surroundings.
Sink? Never you.
You'll float forever, damn you,
Like a firm-based rock
Surrounded by high-tide,
Or a mountain above the clouds.

Diane Hood

love's debris

and in the eyes
of those
that have seen,
a blindspot remains --
such as that of rain on snow.

Patricia C. Marks

The dusky haze parted as you entered the tomb,
you touched that long ago lost soul,
and stopped the dead, breathing lide into
nothingness,

The new songs gazed your being, but you failed
to see,
turn away then, feel not the flow, feel not
the love, but please give me no false caress,

Light failing, the maze once again, becomes a tomb,
fog falls like future promises,
the soul freezes, warmth had been and gone like
the rest.

Bill Gouge

WHEN THE MOON ROARS
or who is the keeper of time?

devil saw the moon roar
and he lifted his head
from his marbled-pillow
and found a million-plus-two,
stoned with his blood
and he marched with them
into the marigold-sun,
blossomed with the
melting fire,
and became
a star,
hurling slowly
towards the earth.
"a piece of the sun" they cried,
"is falling from the sky"
and they stumbled and clashed,
arms against faces, hands across eyes,
until
the last bit of soil
was scorched with the dust of
bones and souls
so that the devil
could lay down
and rest once again.

Patricia C. Marks

You entered (as you always do) late, (as you always are), and almost smiled.
I failed to speak somehow, I clutched the words in my throat trying to make them into conversation.

As you walked away (as always) I almost smiled, but it caught in my throat and mixed with muddled stutters of forgotten words.

Turning, I walked into the darkness, and almost forgot.
But, the memories gripped me (as always), and were retained like icicles in this battered brain.

Bill Gouge

Thrillingly the wind soared
through the green hills,
Flowers waved their approval
of the spring arrival.
The grass pushed up from their
refuge, displaying new clothes
of green.
Pale blue, palest from the robin's egg,
smattered the sky,
Sending the sun's rays
on their journey across the sphere.

Susan Vance

TIDE

I stand where you left your imprint--
    long jagged ripples
where sandcrabs now dig their homes
as tiny air bubbles pop out of the waterfilled holes.
Fragmented shells and scattered wood
sanded smooth after endless years adrift.
You retreat slowly.
Your distant spray echoing in my
    hollow ears.
Your violent waves now like tiny white lines
penned on a world of green darkness
as you roll away towards the horizon.

Lee Patrick O'Hare

"Things are so different when you're older. Time speeds by but things go so slow and don't hold the excitement they once did," she thought to herself.

"It's okay, Mitchell," she said. Mickey was always like that, you know, chasing cars all the time, and bicycle riders and . . ."

"Loren Anne?" Mitchell said, a bit apprehensively, "Loren Anne, you're, I didn't know. I mean, I sort of knew, but, what are you doing here?"

"Yea, it's me, or anyway the name's right but I don't really know if it's the right me or not. It's been a while all right. I haven't seen you since you left for college in Gaffney, and I was in junior high, or thereabouts."

"Yep, quite a while. Nice car."

"It's not mine. Belongs to the captain of the Carnivale, a cruise ship I work on. I sold mine when I went to work on the ship three years ago and didn't want to rent one to drive up here. It drives pretty nice." Anne paused and looked around the property.

"Mitchell, do you know the people, I mean the ones that bought the land and live on it?" she asked.

"Well, I'm not on real friendly terms with them. They have sort of a nouveau riche attitude towards everyone in the neighborhood, except the Wards of course. I don't know. I guess my attitude towards them isn't any too friendly. I loved your grandfather's place too. Did a lot of work there for a lot of years and it hurts to see them tear it all up. They've really got no love for the land or the life that's on it. It just really hurts." Michell patted Mickey on his dusty head and his tail brushed against Anne's legs.

"I don't know if I should've come back or not Mitchell. Memories would pop into my head from nowhere and just make me wonder. You know, like the time we built the raft or would catch squirrels under washtubs or swing down from the fertilizer shed on ropes. I don't know, just the sound of the tin sheets behind the garage when you walked on them or hearing that huge old owl on quiet nights. I just began to wonder if there were more things like that from my childhood that I don't remember. Beautiful things, earthy things, I guess, that I should be able to tell my kids."

"Kids!" Mitchell interrupted, "are you married?"

"Oh no! Not yet anyway, I've got a few years to go before I get classified as "old maid" for God's sake. Mitchell really!" Anne laughed and threw her hair to one side. "This one learned a little from her mother's mistakes. Listen, I'm going to go for a walk around and try not to cry. I may stop back after I'm through, but if I don't, well, whatever. I'd ask you along but I have to be by myself. You understand, I'm sure.

"Yes, I do, really. I spend quite a bit of time over there. A few spots they haven't wiped away yet. If they hassle you, just tell them who you are and it should be okay. If I don't see you, take care." Mitchell walked off, let out a shrill whistle and Mickey bolted across the road.

"Mitchell?" Anne yelled across the street. He stopped under a great old water oak with wisteria trailing up the trunk, she couldn't see his face in the shade. "Tell the family hello for me."

"Will do." He called, and turned to go back into the cooling shade of the house. Mickey curled up on the steps in front of the door.

Anne started up the dirt road towards the house built where the newly grafted roses used to sit. There used to be Spanish bayonets along the side of it and she'd pull out the

new growth from the tops and send the pale green spears dropping to the dirt to stick poison end first. Maumau never liked it, but Granddaddy understood. There was a soft carpeting of pine needles along the edges of the road and she could barely hear her own footsteps.

She was beginning to feel alien in what used to be her own world. A television set was sending its commercial jingles faintly from the inside of the red brick house, and she heard kids' voices from somewhere around the back. Anne walked up between two rows of boxwoods, wondering if the new inhabitants had taken them from the old patio behind her grandparents' house. There didn't seem to be any daddy long-legs on them. There used to be, with their long spindly legs and fat bodies. They would climb all over you for hours if you let them. Maybe these new people kept them away with insecticide or something.

Anne got to the door and pushed the doorbell. She didn't hear it ring on the inside, but heard a small dog's bark. "Oh good," she thought, "a chihuahua, God I hate them." A large black woman opened the door and looked Anne up and down.

"Hi," Anne Said. "I wonder if I could speak to the owner of the house."

The black woman patted her nappy hair a little and replied slowly, "Well, the lady of the house ain't here right this minute, but I can prob'ly help you with anything you want."

"Well, actually, I just wanted to walk around a little bit. You see, I, I mean, my grandfather used to own this place and had a nursery on it, I'm sure you know that. But, anyway, I just wondered if it was okay if I just walked around some." Anne said it rapidly, afraid of being refused.

The black woman's eyes got wider and she blurted out. "Are you da-Loren Anne? My little da-Loren Anne, how you growed! Come in honey, come in. Have some co-cola or something!" She was all smiles and bubbling over.

"Ella Mae!" Anne submitted to the hugs and let out a light laugh."Ella Mae, you're looking right good! No, no, I don't want to come in, I really don't have that much time left. Do you still have Granddaddy's beagle, Charlie Brown?"

"Oh-h-h-h! Honey! He's so fat now he cain't hardly move. An' his little skinny ole legs just pushin' him around. He's so-o-o-o old and he still barks like he did when he chased them rabbits down to the swamp. You're so pretty, honey, I jest cain't believe how you growed up! Bet your gradmamma Eloise is shore proud o' you!" Ella Mae slapped her broad round hips time after time, bent over at the waist and bounced back up again.

"Listen, Ella Mae, I've got to leave in about fifteen minutes, so is it okay if I just walk around till then?" Anne asked.

"Shore honey, you do what you like. Ain't nobody really belong here but you and your granddaddy Longmire anyway. Stop by again sometime and we'll set down an' have us a good talk. An' tell your Maumau Eloise hello for me, though she prob'ly won't care to hear it. You take care now, honey." Ella Mae closed the door carrying on about "da-Loren Anne an' how she growed up so, and on and on.

Anne started towards the river. There really wasn't anything to notice, except things that weren't there, but by not being there the things brought back more vivid memories. She could close her eyes and see it all. The old white bench under the huge camphor tree with ribbons of woodpecker hoses criss-crossing its rough, mossy trunk. There were two or three tiger lilies in bloom, yellow-orange in the bright sun where a huge patch used to be, and she thought of all the times Maumau had cut bunches of them to put on the

mantlepiece in the living room or the brick hearth in the kitchen. A bramble caught her leg and a bright red spot of blood appeared, she licked her thumb and wiped it off, remembering many past blackberry summers.

The fifteen foot tall hedge of Sargeant camellias wasn't there any longer, but she could see the bright red flowers dotting the dark waxy green in early spring.Granddaddy died before he got around to making a new camellia and naming it after her, but mother and her aunt both had one.

Anne got back on the dirt road and headed towards the car. A fence once covered in red and white climbers was how holding up bare, thorny limbs.

"No one to take care of them anymore, no one who cares," she thought to herself.

She came to her favorite place, a great magnolia tree. When she was little she'd climb to the very top and look over the pine trees to the river, feel the wind in her hair and the sun on her face. Nobody could bother her there and she never answered anyone who called her while she was up there unless she wanted to.

She passed the new people's house, waved in case Ella Mae was watching, and walked on to the car. Mitchell came to the door of his house and stood there.

"It's not all gone, Mitchell," she called. "The feeling's still there, a lot of things are still there, if only in my own head. I guess that's where it really is anyway. To anyone else, like these new people, they'll have their own things to remember, for their own reasons. Don't know when I'll be back, if ever, so take it easy."

Mitchell gave a sad smile and raised his hand in a slow wave. "Bye," he called.

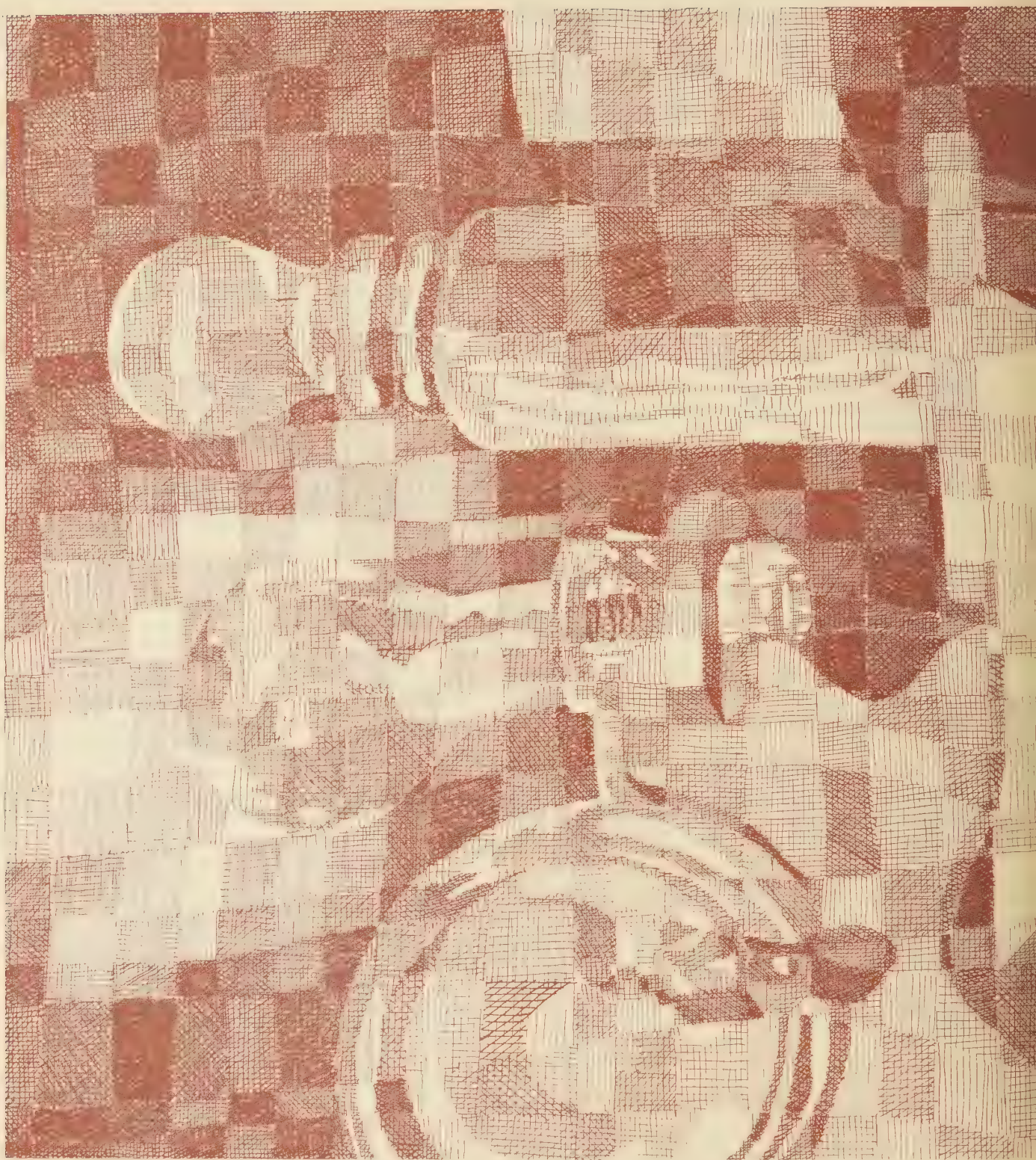
Anne unlocked the car and a rush of hot air hit her when she opened the car door. She sat in the car, started it and turned on the air conditioner. She turned the Benz around in a tight circle and headed out towards Atlantic boulevard. The cassette cartridge popped out of the player and she flipped it over and turned up the volume.

"Years grow shorter not longer
The more you've been on your own
Feeling' for movin' grow stronger
So you wonder why you ever go home . . ."

"You're right J.B.," she said. "You and Thomas Wolfe."

Anne Newsome

Lyrics from Jimmy Buffett's "Changes in Latitudes, changes in Attitudes" album. ABC Records, 1977.



Time in between times,
    Strange interludes -
The present a glimpse away
  Tasting a past,
  Tasting sweeter each day.
  Rich in its emptiness
  Full -
  In utter speechlessness.

Strange, I see now,
  That you and a heather countryside
  Are so alike . . .
   But I can't describe either of
    you,
  Except in quiet shadows -
  For the mystery lies in deep
    paradox,
  Wise as a child,
  Good as a gypsy
  Playing on a timeless
      green field.

Denise Boerckel

REMEMBER?

You said once -
          Two years ago-
That you had no answers;
Were tired of playing a pointless game.
Well, I do not know you, my friend,
But I know that feeling.
And questioned
For many years.
I, too, have found
No answers, only
More questions in
A never-ending journey
Looking,
Not for a house on the Park,
But a hotel in which to stay
For a while,
Just off the Boardwalk.

Diane Hood

dragon madness

sea-green-eyed creature
dangles fish from a silver fingernail
gleaming in the moon's shimmer;
offers a salted taste,
but I refuse, cowering
behind the curtains.

his eyes change,
hurling pink-quartz daggers of electric fire
towards my outstretched hand,
i savor the madness with warmed mind
and begin to glow.

red-glittered wings unfold from his sides,
a ride, perhaps, into
the nightmare coolness of a dream?
maybe a descent into the languid underworld
to whisper with the trolls?
i ponder to accept.

shattered light begins to gray,
rain falls soft.
one single explosion of green and blue powder,
and my world becomes
the same again.
must I cry this time?

Patricia C. Marks

Once upon a forever,
We weaved a tapestry to wear like summer,
We flew the skies with wings like armor,
and turned into a sunset.

Once upon a happy forgotten love,
We held the night back with our daylight,
We fell into the rivers like currents.

Once upon a forever,
We parted with smiles that shadowed the truth,
And waved farewell like shallow strangers.

Bill Gouge

Little squirrel, playing in the life-soil
of your own awareness, feeling
the damp dirt clinging in little clumps
between your claws, digging up winter
acorns with your soul in your paws,
grasping yourself underfoot with no distinction
between yourself and your existence.
How content you appear to me
as you peel back the bark
from towering pines, scurrying to the top
of your limitless world, showering me below
with the flakes of your completeness.
And my heart burns with dry-ice fire
to be like you, to be you, free
to sink my paws in the earth and meet
myself there --damp, cold,
but alive and inseperable from
my little squirrel soul

Lee Patrick O'Hare

A juxtaposition of absurdities ...
As the poet turns to actor
On an angry day,
When silence falls like rain
And stings -

It's quite fitting, you know,
The ocean-child in the mist
  Asked the life-child to sing . . .
  And left before the crescendo.

Denise Boerckel

Dreaming, we dream ourselves --
remembering what is yet to come
and waiting for the past.
The dreamer and the dreamed
dream each other
In an endless corridor of mirrors
until images upon images of images
stretch away unseen.

Julie Bartlett

Blonde hair wispy and wild
  you came in from a hard day's play.
Where have you been?
What new haven did you create
  from the sober adult world?
Mother's eyes -
  hazel with bright flecks of gold
  glittering like Christmas tree ornaments.
Chocolately freckles scattered along your
impish nose and flushed cheeks,
Camoflagued with dirt from places
  no one goes but you.
Now it seems that no one
  will go with you this time either.
Tumbling in the door
  you fling yourself on the couch
  with the jointlessness of a rag doll.
How many more times will you do it?
How much life have you got to live
  before the collectors come?
We've only now come to realize
  you're only with us on loan.

Anne Newsome

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